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YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 6. 1894.

(Illustrated articles are marked with an asterisk.)



Lamps, street, lighting
Lightbouse, Minot's Ledge...
Machine, electric drilling*
Machine, sculpturing, automatic*,
Merchandise sales law
Mummed animals.
New books and publications.
New York, cruiser in dry dock*,
Paint, lunningue,
Peanuts as food
Petroleum, brief history of. Petroleum, brief history of.
Photography in Russia
Photography in Russia
Photography in www.lake.
Photography, snowflake.
Plants, growth in odd places*
Press, belting, dunbie*.
Resper, Russ, of 1844
Seasickness, cure for.
Solar cantery, antiquity of.
Tectorium, glass substitute*.
Treadmid power (5643).
Widab Diet* Widab bird*.....

Zinc, oxide, manuf*....

ABLE OF CONTENTS OF

C AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT No. 940.

Week Ending January 6, 1894.

e 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers

PAGE The Chestout Oak.—A fine foliage tree of ure when growing in England;—I illustration 15018 the Deusity of the Earth. By HENLY WURTZ. The earth and its mystery.—The figures obtained ever tabulated.

co A Study of the Origin of its Features.—By G. anciusion of this very interpreting paper on lunar be causes which have produced its characteristic stration. 15028 .-Anthony Ramenzaum. Recent death of a dis-trician, with dotes on his life.

SITION.—The Columbian Exposition.—By glish china and pottery as shown at Chicago 15021 EXPLORATION.—Antarcile Explorations at the English government in explorations le of the earth.

Standopea Lowii.—A beautiful flowering bed in Kein Bulletin.—1 illustration....... 1508

New Cow Milker.—A curiosity in inven-illustration. I illustration. 15019
loc Sied. By Francis T. FreeLand.—A
drawings, of an improved double runner
ations. 15024
graphic description of the leader of the
dmiral Mello.—The condition of his flagrof Rio.—Illustration. 15025
f.—Reseang an Elephant Calf from a PitMORE.—An interesting episode in natural
15015

sting Artillery Experiments at Elswick.—
be products of the Elswick gun works in
sallery experiments.

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PATENT LITIGATION AND COMPROMISE,

A saying which has become almost an axiom with patent lawyers is to the effect that there is no money in an accounting. A suit for infringement of patent is prosecuted in the federal courts of equity under a motion for injunction and a claim for an accounting. This motion and claim are brought by the owner of the patent against the alleged infringer. If the court sustains the patent, a permanent injunction is granted and the matter is passed into the hands of a master. Here books are examined, profits are discussed and the question of how much in the shape of past profits or royalty should be paid by the enjoined party to the owners of the parent is settled.

These proceedings before the master are often of almost interminable length. Account books, perhaps of many years' accumulation, are submitted, every vantage point is contested by the opposing lawyers, and when all is settled there is apt to be little left of the accounting for the benefit of the holders of the patent. Sometimes they receive an award so great as to be uncollectable, when a compromise is in order. The great expense of the proceeding, including master's, experts' and lawyers' fees, makes it some. thing from which the experienced shrink. A conscientious lawyer will generally advise his client to make the best compromise possible rather than to plunge into an accounting of uncertain duration and suddenly melts down into a thin cake of bard amalgam expense.

The unsatisfactory accounting, which is theoretically the object of a patent suit, is really the outcome of moved with tongs to a ledge on one side of the pan to something which is also unsatisfactory in many cases cool, and the next pan operated upon. Unless the latter form of proceeding has become very expensive. used but once with each of them, as the heat re-Competent lawyers must be ret; ned and the best experts must testify in patent suits. The records are taken down word for word from the witnesses, and the time consumed and, consequently, the per diem bills of master, counsel and experts rapidly mount to large proportions.

It is said that at a recent meeting of some of the great electrical interests it was shown that enough tion, which experiment and invention will readily money had been spent in lawsuits to pay dividends for evolve. several years. Lawsuits are a very unsatisfactory instrumentality for virtually increasing the capitalization of companies. A million of dollars sunk in a suit represents so much additional capital on which interest must be paid. This kind of expenditure cannot legitimately be treated as working expense.

The practical moral would seem to be that owners of patents should avoid too inelastic or abstract a treatment of their rights. There is little glory in maintaining a patent-it is all a matter of business. If, therefore, a certain revenue can be obtained by licensing a presumed infringer, it is often better to do so than to sue with uncertainty of success. It may be ores, to devise plans of feeding the amalgam autosafely said that no one knows how limited his patent matically to the battery and pans in minute graduis until it has been through the courts. By compromising his claims an inventor will usually obtain an acquiescence in a wider interpretation of his patent than experienced through obstacles in the nature of such he could hope from the action of a court. The various companies who were infringers of the Edison lamp patents were willing, it is said, to pay a royalty of ten cents a lamp and acknowledge the validity of the patent. Probably it would have been wiser to have accepted this payment rather than to have continued the litigation.

THE ALKALI METALS POTASSIUM AND SODIUM .- II. THEIR ALLOYS AND AMALGAMS.

In continuation, we must supplement our statement of the properties of these metals somewhat. At its melting point, sodium is as liquid, mobile and lustrous as mercury. It instantly tarnishes in damp, but not in dry air. It becomes pasty at about 122' F. At the ice temperature it is still ductile, but below zero Fahrenheit becomes brittle and crystalline. Sodium stands high as a conductor of heat and electricity, being in these respects surpassed only by gold, silver and copper. Hence, in cases where mercury is applied as a mobile liquid conductor, the liquid alloy might be preferable-protected, of course, from damp air, say by inclosure in a space commun cating with the air only through a tube containing calcium chloride.

An American chemist, Charles A. Seeley, now deceased, discovered a surprising property of these alkali metals. They dissolve, as metals apparently, in liquefied ammonia gas, and on evaporation are left in their original metallic forms The solutions are transparent and of deep blue color.

As aforesaid, the discoverer of the alkali metals found that mercury containing a little of them would sible, in this country, not less than two new vessels of About 1840 an English chemist, Robert Mallet, dis- named, and that they should be constructed of Americovered also that melted metals having no natural can materials throughout. In this way some encouraffinity for iron dissolve it rapidly when containing a agement to American ship building would be secured. ittle sodium or potassium. An American chemist,
Another provision was that the new ships should be little sodium or potassium. An American chemist,
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The cost of codium then ranged in Company. Philadelphia. for the construction of two in France. 2 Hustrations. 1500 permit at and inventions in this new, and patential before into contracts with the construction of two the system and methods of carrying it on. 1500s some of them. The cost of sodium then ranged in Company, Philadelphia, for the construction of two

this country from \$8 to \$10 per pound; and his inventions, patented prematurely. about 1865 or 1867, were, therefore, of no economical value, and have long been public property. Now that it is proved, however, by Castner's work, that if a market exists for sodium it can be produced at a cost of 18 cents per pound, and the liquid alloy doubtless for little more, these forgotten devices should be revived and improved upon by supplementary inventions. Some of these methods of H. Wurtz were as follows.

First.—A method of rapidly making these metals into solid amalgams, in which forms they can be handled, and their great energies and affinities utilized, without danger or difficulty. Combination with mercury involves great and usually highly explosive evolution of heat, which Wurtz obviated by a very simple device. Instead of starting with pure mercury, he employed a pasty amalgam, containing about two per cent of the alkali metal; this being about half saturated; for solid, hard, fully saturated amalgani of sodium contains but four to five per cent. A series of iron pans is set in a row, with a small Bunsen burner which can be moved from one to the other. A lump of sodium, averaging a third to a half ounce, is placed on the amalgam in one of these pans, with a little paraffine wax as a flux. The burner is then applied beneath, until the sodium, without any explosion, floating on the poorer amalgam below, which is itself liquefied by the heat of the reaction. This cake is re--the injunction awarded the patent suit itself. The 'number of pans is too large, the burner need be tained is sufficient to produce immediate combination. One operator could in this way make a thousand pounds daily of saturated amalgam without an explosion. The cakes are all melted together under paraffine in iron kettles, and cast into ingots or other shapes desired. To use the liquid alloy in this way some modifications will be required in the manipula-

Second.—A very little of such amalgam added to mercury was found by H. Wurtz tointensifyso greatly the adhesion of the mercury to gold and silver that when these occur in ores in such forms as to be untouched by ordinary mercury, this prepared mercury instantly amalgamates and absorbs them.

Third.—When mercury becomes "floured" or "sick," as it is called, a little sodium amalgam wholly cures it, and coalesces the detached globules instantly. The water in the apparatus slowly dissolves out the sodium, but it will be a very simple matter of invention, now that sodium is applicable with great profit to such ated quantities.

Fourth,-in alloying metals much trouble is often metals. Many such difficulties altogether disappear when a little sodium is present.

Fifth.—Wurtz invented also the now familiar addition of sodium to various kinds of solders, and to baths for coating iron and copper with zinc ("galvanizing," so called), lead, tin, and divers alloys.

Sixth.—He devised a plan for removing the sodium and mercury (if present), when desirable, from such metallic coatings, by washing them out, so to speak, in a bondary bath of the same metal. When this secondary oath becomes charged with sodium, it is used as a primary bath. The primary baths need not contain any mercury, as, with proper precautions, the sodium itself may be incorporated directly with other metals.

The best "pickles" and fluxes for these widely varying operations of coating, etc., will become subjects of invention. We should warn experimenters that nothing can be done with aluminum in this field. Mercury destroys it rapidly.

In another article methods of direct production of the liquid and other alloys, with applications of electrolysis to their manufacture and manipulation, will be indicated.

THE NEW STEAMERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATION COMPANY,

It will be remembered that two years ago Congress passed an act authorizing the placing of the American flag on the two splendid ocean steamers Paris and New York, which vessels, although chiefly owned by American citizens, were built in England. The conditions for the American registry were, among other things, that the company should build, as soon as posenfilm, or wet (so to speak), iron, steel and platinum, at least equal size and speed to the vessels above